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Treasury Sanctions Prominent Syrian Businessman

8/4/2011

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced today the designation of Muhammad Hamsho, a member of the Syrian Parliament and prominent businessman, pursuant to Executive Orders (E.O.) 13573 and 13572 for providing services in support of, and for acting for or on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Asad and for acting for or on behalf of President Asad's brother Mahir al-Asad. Hamsho International Group, a Syrian holding company that has approximately 20 subsidiary or affiliated companies, was also designated today pursuant to E.O.s 13573 and 13572 for being controlled by Muhammad Hamsho.

E.O. 13573 targets senior officials of the Government of Syria. The U.S. imposed sanctions against President Bashar al-Asad in May 2011 by listing him in the Annex to E.O. 13573. E.O. 13572 targets Syrian officials and others responsible for human rights abuses in Syria. Mahir al-Asad was listed in the Annex to E.O. 13572 in April 2011 for the leading role he played in the Syrian regime's actions in Dar'a, where protesters have been killed by Syrian security forces.

"Muhammad Hamsho earned his fortune through his connections to regime insiders, and during the current unrest, he has cast his lot with Bashar al-Asad, Mahir al-Asad and others responsible for the Syrian government's violence and intimidation against the Syrian people," said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. "The sanctions we are applying today to Hamsho and his company are the direct consequence of his actions."

Hamsho is one of Syria's top businessmen and has interests in nearly every sector of the Syrian economy. He is a close business associate of Mahir al-Asad and has served as a frontman for him and a number of Asad's businesses. He has provided gifts to gain the favor of senior Syrian officials and has served as a front to mask a senior Syrian official's illicit and licit financial and business transactions. Members of the Syrian business community believe that Hamsho is a successful businessman because of his relationship to Syrian elites rather than his business acumen. In addition, during Hamsho's successful bids for election to the Syrian parliament, he paid large sums of money to secure his seat.

Hamsho International Group has interests in the fabrication of metal products; distribution of construction, electrical machinery, equipment, and chemicals; civil contracting for water, oil, gas, petrochemicals, buildings, and infrastructure projects; trade in telecommunication products, computers, and computer peripherals; provision of internet services; television production; ownership and management of hotels and resorts; car rental; distribution of carpets; animal farming and trade in horses; printing services; and production of ice cream.

As one of the company's main shareholders, Hamsho is Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hamsho International Group and is listed as the company's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager.

As a result of today's action, U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in commercial or financial transactions with today's designees and any assets they may hold subject to U.S. jurisdiction are frozen.

Identifying Information:

Individual: **Muhammad Hamsho**

AKA: Muhammad Sabir Hamshu
AKA: Mohammed Saber Hamsho
AKA: Mohammad Hamsho
AKA: Mohamed Hamcho
AKA: Mohammed Hamshou
DOB: May 20, 1966
POB: Damascus, Syria
Nationality: Syrian
Passport Number: 002954347

Entity: Hamscho International Group

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